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Education is top priority of Barisan hopeful

BARISAN Nasional candidate Syamsul Anuar Ismail wants to turn Sungai Petani into an education hub.

The 37-year-old former Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) lecturer promised to build two tertiary institutions if he got elected as the Member of Parliament in this constituency.

"If I am picked as MP, I want to bring a MARA Junior Science College (MRSM) Ulul Albab to Pantai Merdeka and a public institution of higher learning (IPTA)," said the first-time candidate.

He said when it comes to education, Sungai Petani loses out to the nearby Merbok constituency, which currently has a Mara Junior Science College and the AIMST University in Semeling.

A MRSM Ulul Albab college would focus on both science and religion, he said.

Syamsul Anuar also said that many Sungai Petani locals were working in Penang-based factories, adding that a public university would help them to increase their skills.

On top of that, he added that the Sungai Petani's economy would be boosted with new students coming to study here.

He also plans to develop the district's riverbanks, and construct recreational sites similar to Kuching's famed waterfront destination.

Drawing from his experience as Kedah's Malaysian Association of Youth Clubs (MAYC) chairman, he said he also wanted to see a sports complex built in the city.

"We would have a full centre, with seminar

rooms, halls, facilities for squash, tennis and futsal. This would be a focal point for youth development," he said.

For this to work, he added that both the state and Federal Governments needed to be under Barisan Nasional, so that the construction process would be easier.

Another local issue Syamsul Anuar was also concerned with was community engagement, which he claimed was not fulfilled by incumbent MP Datuk Johari Abdul.

He said he would form a collaborative council made up of the city's various leaders, councillors and NGOs, which would meet with locals and try to solve their problems.

When asked on what he would bring to the Dewan Rakyat, Syamsul said he was more

interested in solving local matters, and preferred to leave federal issues to his seniors.

He was also aware of his weaknesses as a first-time candidate, adding that it was not easy for him to campaign in the elections.

"As an academician, I am used to theories which are used in the classroom, but when it comes to politics, it appears that some theories are not as accurate as they seem," he said.

Even so, Syamsul Anuar was grateful for the help he received from his comrades in Umno, adding that he had appointed Shahanim Mohd Yusof to help drum up his campaign.

Syamsul Anuar will be facing PKR's Johari, KITA's Suhaimi Hashim and independent candidate Ong Wei Sin in a four-cornered fight.